



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, John F. Scott, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter.

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

7:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Scott and Councilor Sheets
Members Absent: Councilor Bond and Councilor Streeter

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnyan.

3. Calendar and Communications

Councilor O'Beirne reported that the Charter Revision Commission last night considered abolishment of the RTM and after much discussion, the group voted in favor of retaining the RTM.

4. Approval of Minutes

2007-0213 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole of August 28, 2007 and September 4, 2007 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Scott, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

2007-0007 Pending Litigation (2007 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Discussion of this item was postponed to the end of the meeting.

2003-0177 Renovations & Additions to Groton School Facilities - Phase I

Discussed

Town Manager Oefinger provided a brief update noting that the Phase II School Design Committee recently toured the two new elementary schools and the windows are being installed at Kolnaski.

2007-0010 Joint Meeting with City Council (2007 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Mayor Watson noted there will be a joint meeting with the City Council on September 18th at 6:30 p.m. The Mayor suggested Thames Street Rehabilitation and the Buddington Road property as topics for discussion.

2007-0011 Joint Meeting with Board of Education (2007 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Mayor Watson is waiting for a response from Chairman Washington regarding a joint meeting.

2007-0072 Citizen Committee on Property Tax Relief - Update

Discussed

The report of the Citizens Committee on Property Tax Relief was distributed to the Council. The Committee would like to address the Council at the September 25th Committee of the Whole meeting.

2007-0191 Reuse of Groton Heights School

Discussed

The Council received a suggested resolution prepared by the Town Manager with proposed membership for a Groton Heights School Reuse Committee.

A motion was made by Councilor Scott, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2007-0211 Panhandling Ordinance

Recommended for Deletion

Town Manager Oefinger noted that additional information collected by the Town Attorney on this subject is available in the Town Manager's Office. Panhandling is a very complicated issue with lots of case law and it is considered a first amendment issue. Regulations in other communities usually address "aggressive" panhandling. The two situations in Groton cited in the past have been observed by the Police and do not appear to fall into the category of "aggressive" panhandling. The Town Manager noted that the Town can craft an ordinance, but it will probably not address the existing situation.

Discussion followed. Councilor Scott expressed concern with the location of the panhandlers at two major gateways to Groton. Town Manager Oefinger noted he is more concerned with the potential public safety issue. The consensus of the Committee was to keep the information on file and delete the referral.

2007-0214 Proposed Aquarion Rate Increase

Recommended for Deletion

The Committee briefly discussed this issue and the consensus of the Committee was to not take a position on the rate increase and to delete the referral.

2007-0008 Legislative Policy (2007 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent noted that proposals are due to CCM and the Council must come to a consensus on items to send to CCM. Discussion followed on various legislative issues. Councilor O'Beirne reiterated his desire to have a level of Town Council oversight for Planning and Zoning. Discussion followed and a majority of the Council recommended forwarding the suggestion to CCM.

2007-0007 Pending Litigation (2007 Standing Referral)

A motion was made by Councilor Scott, seconded by Councilor Sheets, to enter executive session at 8:00 p.m. to discuss potential litigation associated with the school window issue, and to invite the Town Manager to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session concluded at 8:33 p.m.

7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List

2006-0239 Animal Shelter

Recommended for Deletion

2007-0022 Senior Center Expansion

Recommended for Deletion

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Scott, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.